

## Developing a Prioritization Process for the Contaminant Candidate List (CCL)

Octavia Conerly  
Environmental Scientist  
Office of Water, Office of Science and Technology, Health and Ecological Criteria Division  
(202) 566-1094  
conerly.octavia@epa.gov

**Authors:** O. Conerly, J.M. Donohue, S. Kueberuwa, A. Mahfouz, C.O. Abernathy, A. Bathija, N. Chiu, J. Du

**Key Words:** drinking water contaminants, Safe Drinking Water Act, Contaminant Candidate List, priority-setting, regulations

The Safe Drinking Water Act Amendment of 1996 requires the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to develop a list of contaminants(CCL) every five years to assist in priority-setting efforts for the drinking water program. From each list, the Agency is required to make regulatory determinations for at least five contaminants three years after its publication. The first CCL (1998) was criticized by some stakeholders for not considering a wider range of chemical and microbial contaminants. Accordingly, USEPA requested assistance from the National Research Council (NRC) to develop a prioritization process that would consider all potential drinking water contaminants. In response to USEPA, NRC published a series of reports. The most recent and final report, *Classifying Drinking Water Contaminants for Regulatory Consideration*, recommends that the Agency develop the CCL using two steps. The process would begin with a “universe” of potential and known drinking water contaminants. Using screening criteria and expert judgment, this universe would be reduced to a preliminary CCL (PCCL). The CCL would be selected from the PCCL using a classification tool(e.g., neural network) in conjunction with expert judgment to prioritize the drinking water contaminants. The classification method would involve the selection and scoring of attributes. The NRC suggested using attributes (potency, severity, magnitude, prevalence, persistence/mobility) that would characterize potential or known health effects and potential or known water occurrence for contaminants. To evaluate the feasibility of the NRC suggestions, EPA formed, and has been actively working with, an advisory group under the National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC). The workgroup consists of a diverse group of representatives from the academic community, public water utilities, State governments, and environmental interest groups. Recommendations and advice pertaining to how EPA could proceed are expected from the working group in early 2004.